

In light of the Isaiah passage, we can see that when Jesus tells the 70 not to take money, possessions, or food for the journey, he is telling them not to be deflected from living into the new creation God is bringing about in them. Money, possessions, and food are certainly not intrinsically evil, but they can occupy an enormous amount of our time and attention in daily life and therefore become sidetracks that deflect our energy and block the Spirit from doing his work in us.

Even more serious is Jesus' instruction to the 70 that whenever they meet opposition or indifference, they are simply to move on. It is not necessary to read urgency into this scene. It is simply necessary to see that God has all the various outcomes of our mission and ministry in hand, and we don't. The source of new life, the energy of the Spirit that brings forth the new creation, these are God's to give and not ours to make or control. This is presumably why, when the 70 return with joyful amazement at their success in overcoming demons, Jesus says, "Do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20) What matters is the gift and purpose of God's new creation. Paying attention to anything else is simply a misuse and abuse of time and of all the other gifts we are given.